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The



PLUTOOCRAT

SCHUPPHÄUS.

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The plutocrat. :A drama in five acts. /B



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TO MY ESTEEMED FRIEND,
WILLIAM WALTON,
PRESIDENT OF THE BROOKLYN PRESS CLUB.

THE PLUTOCRAT.

A DRAMA IN FIVE ACTS.

BY

OTTO FREDERICK SCHUPPHAUS.
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NEW YORK:
A. LOVELL & CO.
1892.

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PREFACE.

A DRAMA in blank verse may challenge criticism by suggesting a certain presumption on the part of the author ; but the form having seemed fitting in the present case, the author saw no reason why he should defer to any literary superstition by choosing another. The book looks for an audience amid the thousands, aye, the millions, who watch with eager interest the greatest struggle waged in modern times—the struggle between the rich and the poor, between capital and labor. It appeals to all who like to hear the unfettered voice of the whole people, not of one class only. It has been the author's aim to be strictly impartial. How far he has succeeded is for the reader to judge.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

WEST, a rich manufacturer.

HENRY, his superintendent.

IDA FIELD, a widow.

ALICE, her daughter.

JACK,

PAUL,

GEORGE,

PATRICK,

PETER,

CHARLES,

FRED,

MARY, a servant.

Lawyer, porter, servants, and workingmen.

The many still must labor for the one!

BYRON, "The Corsair."

THE PLUTOCRAT.

ACT I.

SCENE I. *Room in Mrs. Field's House.*

Ida. Yes, Alice will be home to-day, I hear.
How long it seems since last I saw her! Ah!
If she but knew how great has been my grief,
How much it costs me to be far from her,
And let her grow up under strangers' eyes,
Then she might understand a mother's love!
But what will not an ardent mother do
To see her darling happy and content?
If sorrow is the price of happiness,
Then Heaven may grant that all shall yet be
well!

Henry. Well, madam, you will proudly meet
your child—
An image, closely copied, of yourself.

She was no stranger at my uncle's school.
Before her sunny and ingenuous charm
His pedantry quite melted. He loved her,
She was his pride, and even his own girls
Had not a better friend in him than she.
We all adored her—fairy she was called.
The name is fitting; she's as beautiful—
As beautiful as is—

Ida. An angel!

Henry. No,

Just let us say: as is her mother fair.

I am no flatterer, accept my word.

But when I saw you first I truly thought

'Twas she, so does her face repeat your own.

Ida. Your words cause more than mere embarrassment.

Such reckless compliment is dangerous;

And were your pretty phrases quite sincere

They yet would be in truth love's labor lost.

Our life is too distraught for empty words!

Henry. Upon my honor, madam, you are wrong!

I am no gallant—as you think I am.

You must perceive my rude facility.

If I have been offensive, pardon me.

I may have been too blunt, but truth is truth!

I am no man with sleek society arts.

Grown up in earnest work among my books,
I could not seize the superficial gloss
You'll find in gilded youths. But what I say
Has honest meaning, is no soft deceit.

Ida. I will believe your words; you are sincere,
And I can trust you. Yes, I am still young;
When yet a child I also was a wife.
Yet care has seemed to make me quickly old,
And thought of all that I have had to bear
Imparts a sound of mockery to praise.

Henry. Whatever griefs have hurt you, I know not;
I only know I grieve to see you sad.
Forgive—I am impulsive. If you need
A friend, believe that I am one who would
Be proud to stand with you against the world.
I'm simple-hearted, yet I'm strong and true.
It quite unmans me thus to hear you sigh.
If I can help you, speak! You've naught to do
But to command me.

Ida. You are very kind.
Your friendship cheers me, and your manly words
Have won my confidence. If I had known
A friend like you in years now sadly past,
All might be well, but—

Enter MARY.

Mary.

Mr. West is here.

Ida. O Mr. Henry, you must leave me ! He
Must not suspect that you are here, and I
Cannot explain. Quiek ! let this curtain serve
To hide you here. [Exit Henry.

Enter WEST.

West. How is my gentle friend ?
I hope you're happy and enjoying life.
How flushed you look, my dear ! Did you shed
tears
For your dead husband ? True, he was a man
Whom all the world could love, as strong and
handsome
As Adonis. Loving you so well !
He loved you with such love he fled away
To die with strangers, far from home and wife.
He did not wish you near him then ; he feared
The shoek would kill you. Ah, he was so noble !
Doubtless, then, he died of love. Sad fate !
But all beloved by God, they say, die young !

Ida. I wish He'd love you more, then, Mr.
West.

West. And could you breathe so harsh a wish ?
Your words
Quite shock me. Surely you can't mean—

Ida.

Desist!

West. But heed, my gentle friend; are you not wrong

To heap abuse upon your truest friend?

Was it not I who gave you strong support

To brave this life when all your friends were gone?

And this though you refused my heart and hand,
And did not hesitate to speak your hate.

Is this a due reward for my great love?

Ida. If you have come to taunt me with account

Of your good offices, go on, go on!

Make bleed anew the wounds now hardly healed,
And spare me not; just kill me inch by inch!

I doubt not that the torture pleases you.

West. Speak not of pleasure, when you know so wellMy life is spent in work for others' weal,
Not for my own. And yet, 'tis strange, the more I love, the more I'm hated; even you, Who have all reason to show gratitude, You hate me more than all the rest combined. I've been your heartlessly rejected swain, But never have I thought of sweet revenge When I might well have taken it. To you I freely give the comforts of this life,

Still you persist! But why should I complain?
My conscience is—

Ida. Your conscience, did you say?
You never had a conscience! if you had
It is not seen. O unctious hypocrite!
You know the reason of my hate. 'Twas you
Who took my husband from me! I know not
By what foul means you made your schemes
succeed.

You broke his heart, you made him flee and die.
He thought me false, distrusted me, who never
Loved a man but him! I did not see
My husband till grim death had done its work.
Then 'twas by your good grace—you had revenge!

West. Revenge is sweet, 'tis very often said—
I do not know. I only know that love
Is sweeter—not that love of which your poets
Sing romantic strains, but that true love,
That love—

Ida. Of serpents whose embrace is death!

West. Has such a sentiment kept you aloof?
I see it now! But I am not so bad.
And if I were a serpent, it were one
That did not shine in many brilliant hues,
And did not sting you to your very heart!

Ida. You coward! You can go too far with
this!

West. Weep, my fair friend ; your feelings
need the vent.

I could weep with you, for I know your grief
And feel it keenly. Call me vilest names ;
All these offend me not, if they but give
Some slight relief to you. So goes the world !
Beauty and youth are naught if they're not paired
With Mammon. Gold's the greatest of all kings,
Yes, gold is very life, and gold is might ;
It makes the greatest wrong the greatest right.
You have refused to profit by this truth,
Your beauty has but been your luckless star.
And now must Alice turn to do that well
Wherein her handsome mother failed. And,
pray,
How is my Alice ?

Ida. She returns to-day,
And on my knees here, West, I now implore you,
Leave the girl to me ! If you but knew
The long and bitter anguish of my soul ;
If you could know how eagerly I long
To clasp her to my heart ; if you could feel
The thousandth part of a true mother's love—
Then even your impassive heart might melt.
Ah ! Let me have my child ! For once have pity !
Then I could forgive ! I can bear all,
But let my child alone, let her be happy !

West. Alice shall be happy, but with me ;
And all that money buys is freely hers—
Her costliest whims shall all be gratified.
I hope you didn't forget your contract yet—
The girl is mine, and she shall be my wife !
On that condition I have brought her up
In cultured comfort and have cared for you.
Now you as well must do your part.

Ida. My part !

Cursed be that fatal hour of dark despair
When I consented to the sinful scheme !
I only yielded in the feeble hope
That Providence would kindly interfere—

West. And I might die ; but Providence, my
dear,
Hasn't been so kind—to you ; I live,
And come to claim my just and due reward.
Now let the girl enjoy my princely wealth.

Ida. How little men perceive of woman's
heart !

You cannot buy her love with all the riches
You may own.

West. Yet money still is king !
That you still doubt it who have felt its might,
Quite daunts my comprehension, Ida ; for
If money buys not love, at least it buys
That semblance which is all I care to ask.

If she's in duty bound to love but me,
Why should she not?

Ida. But duty is not love.

West. Yet women, as you know, are soon
inured

To unions that at first may scarcely please ;
And knots that wisdom binds with useful gold
Are always strongest. Well you know
What 'tis to love, and what it is to bear
The pangs of want. But not for me I speak !
If you prefer to see your lovely child
Fight for herself the battle of this life,
To see her float in momentary bliss,
Then sink at last in ruin and despair,
It rests with you ; just say the word, my friend,
And I'll retire.

Ida. You're right in all you say;
And yet the forced alternative is harsh.
God knows the strain the wish to save her want
Has put upon my heart; for I have yearned
To give her golden gain though love be gone.
But leave me now alone; I am not well—
My brain is whirling, leave me!

West. Is this, then,
A bargain? You will not deceive me now?
It is not safe for you and yours! Farewell!
And may God bless you! [Exit West.]

Enter HENRY.

Henry. Did I hear aright?
Is Alice sold—sold, like a slave, for gold?
Yes, worse than sold, she's—

Ida. Sold him by her mother!
Yes, condemn me. What don't I deserve?
May God forgive; from men I crave no grace!

Henry. What do you say? Condemn you?
No, not that,
But I must feel the horror of your fate.
O, for the power to crnsh the cruel hand
That injures you! To have the strength to hurl
Him into deepest gloom! Condemn you? No,
You're innocent; I can believe but that.

Ida. You frighten me with your ingenuous
faith.
I know full well that I must bear the blame.
My trials seem severe, for how could I
Let Alice die in want and misery?
Perhaps 'twould have been better in the end.
Why did I dream of fortune for my child?
Why longed I for revenge by day and night?
Why did I think of Alice as a means
To ruin West as he has ruined us?
Why did I let such wild, unruly thoughts
Imbue my mind with such unholy aims?

But as I've loved I've hated ! God forgive !
All this is past, to Thee I leave revenge ;
Give me but strength to find the right way now,
And let my child's fate be the best it may,
For mine has been a most unhappy one !
Heaven only knows—what words can never tell—
What I've endured, and how I have atoned ;
But I have borne it—borne it for my child.
Now let the fruit be worth the sacrifice !

Henry. I understand your grief, I see its depth ;
But do not be despondent, lose not hope !
Here stands a friend who only seeks the chance
To save you from this loathsome suitor, this
Great hypocrite in guise of friend. Keep heart,
You have no right to kill yourself with grief ;
Your life should not be wasted in despair.

Ida. If you had seen what I have seen, my
friend,
You'd look on life in quite another light.
I honor you, and be assured that naught
That might my daughter's lot improve shall go
Undone. Doubt not my heart ! I've loved too
well ;
But love alone can never give to us
A perfect happiness. I won't find fault,
But if, as I am told, you love my girl,
Forget her ! And believe it for the best !

You are still young, you can and will forget.
Make not still harder my but too hard task.

Henry. Don't speak like that! Forgive me if
I say

We cannot lean on sentiment. We must
Use energy—not bow before defeat.
We must do battle for Fortuna's smile,
It will not do to merely wait for it.
I should not interfere did not your good
Most certainly demand that some one should.
It is my sacred duty, and no man
Can hold me back. It is not for myself;
It is for you as well as for your child,
And you not least, since such distressing state
Is more than you can bear.

Ida. I feel the strain,
And I am grateful for your noble words;
But now I feel too well it is too late!

Henry. Too late? Refuse that thought;
there's ample time
To win the fight! Take but a quick resolve,
Cut every bond that binds you to this man,
And leave with me the care for both of you.
Leave me the struggle I will gladly make
To bring you peace, to make you quickly lose
The memory of these clouds.

Ida. Your words are music,

Yet they torture when I think the truth.
I know too well that it can never be !
You do not know the man you rage against :
His craftiness and cunning strike a blow
Like cruel lightning. Well he knows the night
His money brings ; and should you cross his path
He'd crush you—blast the prospects of your life.
You are in his employ : one word from him
And you will lose your place. Whom once he
hates

Will find no rest while he has strength to hurt.
And more, instead of helping us, you help
Increase the danger of worse blows for us.

Henry. I do not doubt that he is all you say,
But that shall not deter me in this cause.
It is a crime to let him claim your girl,
To sell her beauty to a heartless wretch !

Ida. That is a bitter truth. I know full well
How galling is the thought of yielding her
To one whom I so thoroughly despise.
To you this rightly seems a monstrous thing :
Alternatives force us to dreadful deeds.
My daughter does not know the world, and I
Have no intent of teaching her these things.
He loves her in his way, no doubt of that,
And with the riches that he has, can make
Her life an easy and a pleasant one.

And then—and then—I know the thought is sin,
But drowning people often catch at straws—
He's old—he cannot live forever !

Henry.

Old !

His age can never save the stain of wrong.
Though Alice lived with all material gifts
She still would suffer for the loss of love.
That sinful bond, that gilded misery
Would break her heart ; and hearts like hers are
born

For love, which is the sunshine of her life.

Ida. But if she does not marry him she then
Will feel the taste of poverty, and that
Has power to imbitter the whole soul ;
It sears the heart and makes the conscience hard ;
It crushes out the thought of nobler things—
And more in women than it does in men.
I then but choose what seems the smaller ill.
'Tis natural to seek the hammer's part
Than to be made the hammer-beaten plate.

Henry. It seems to me you fear this man too
much.

Is he a giant with a Titan's strength,
That right dare not oppose his cruel might ?

Ida. Yes, I do fear him, I confess to that ;
I have no doubt that I should seal our doom
If I opposed him. Yes, I fear him much :

Not for myself, but more for those I love.
If he had seen you here you would be marked,
'Twould be enough to make you lose your place.

Henry. Your fear seems almost superstitious ;
but

Don't fear for me—no need of that as yet ;
I shall now try by deeds, and not by words,
To merit your esteem, perhaps your love.
I will defy this ravager of homes !
He's wronged you—that is plain and quite
enough ;
And if his power were ten times as great,
He should yet pay for that.

Ida. Control yourself !

Think not of me ; I've learned to bear it all ;
And I implore you, pray you, for your sake,
Do nothing rash, be not so fierce ! Your rage
Will but destroy yourself, not injure him,
And I should feel that I had been the cause.
Be warned in time of my depressing fate—
That those who loved me and whom I have
loved

Have met an early doom. Be warned in time !

Henry. [Aside] Yet death were welcome if it
were for her !

[Aloud] Your views are gloomy, but I shall be
warned.

Still let me make one last and great endeavor ;
If I made no effort I could feel
No comfort in my after-life. To fail
Is possible, but failing in a cause
So good is better than to fail to act.
I still could have the vision of a true,
A sweet, angelic woman blessing me.
That thought can make me now serene, and fit
For superhuman struggles. Trust my strength.

Ida. You are a strange, a very strange young man,
Unlike the ordinary types we meet.
And yet your instincts, I can feel, are true.
But those with loftiest aims are often known
To be misled. The truest, noblest minds
Are in perpetual danger. True it is
That common men stay in their common sphere,
While those with lofty aims can never rest.
They strive to spur their common clay and fly,
And often fall to depths of sad despair.
Before you try to fight a man like West
Remember all the chances of defeat.
I must compose myself ; I'm now a prey
To my emotions, and I need some rest ;
In such a state I should not greet my child,
And she will soon be here. You'll pardon me
If in the garden I collect myself.

And you, if nothing calls you hence in haste,
Might linger till she comes. [Exit Ida.]

Henry. Am I a madman or am I a villain ?
Who's this woman ? Who this creature fair
That fills my breast with this soul-burning fire ?
What did she say of her depressing fate—
“ That those who loved me and whom I have loved
Have met an early doom.” If she loves me
Perhaps my end is near. But this is raving.
Can she love one who deserves contempt ?
Am I a madman or am I a villain ?
Where's my sense of honor ? Has it gone ?
Where is my pride, the master of my heart ?
Is it before her beauty dashed to pieces ?
Where's my guardian angel, to withstand
The mighty devil who has hold of me ?
Here in the first hour of a strong temptation
I'm a traitor to the truest, purest,
And most trusting girl that ever breathed !
There is no punishment too hard for me !
I must despise myself : I am no man,
I am a base, a mean, and heartless wretch !
I wrong them both, the mother and her girl !
But I will save them—save them from this West,
And then, perhaps, must save them from myself,
Who am a danger also in their path.

Enter ALICE.

Alice. Where is my mother? Henry! Is it you?

But how you look! What ails you, boy? You're pale.

Why don't you speak to me? Is this your welcome

For your little Alice, home again?

Henry. Your mother's in the garden, I believe.

Alice. How bad you are to keep me in suspense.

Quick, what has happened, haughty, naughty boy! I hope you did not lose the book I sent.

Henry. I lost myself—

Alice. Do not torment me so.

What makes you look so grave? What are your thoughts?

You will not tell? O, then you do not love Me half so much as I do you.

Henry. Ah! don't!

Don't say I do not love you. 'Tis not true!

But well I know I never shall deserve

A love so pure as yours. Believe me, child, All your sweet gentleness and charming grace Are thrown away upon a worthless lad, Who cannot reach the summit of your love.

Alice. Thank God that this is all! I know
your worth—

It makes me prouder than the proudest girl.
Be cheerful, and let sunlight have your face;
Kiss me for welcome, call me little pet,
Then you'll forget your cares.

Henry. Alas, my pet!

You are too good. If you but knew the truth!

Alice. Don't be so solemn, it is not becoming;
You're not like yourself, and I prefer
Your usual mood. Be good, or I shall scold!
And now enough of that; take me to her.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II. *A Garden.*

Alice. And was there ever happier girl than I?
A loving mother is the greatest boon,
A mother who could move a heart of stone.
I'm sure I don't deserve such happiness.
Yet I can't love you more than I do now,
My only, dearest mother! Take my heart,
'Tis all I have.

Ida. And you have mine, my dear.
Throughout the lonely years of separation
Love for you has grown to greater strength.

Alice. And so it has with me. I'm angry quite
At Uncle West, he came so many times,

And brought me candy, dresses, books, and gems,
But never brought me back to you. He said :
“ Your education first, and then the pleasure.”
Heury's uncle was to me a father,
Yet I missed a mother's tender care.
How often have I begged of Uncle West
To bring you. How I scolded, wept, and raged,
But all in vain ; he stood there like a rock,
Unmoved by tears. I don't know why, because
In other things he was so generous.

[*To Henry*] Now don't make such a face, you silly
boy !

Or are you even jealous of my uncle ?
Come ! Why are you so mysterious ?
Perhaps you've read a novel, fell in love
With some fair heroine. A tragic thought !
But I absolve you, though I'm madly jealous,
And exact that you shall tell her name.
Who is she ? Let the fearful secret out !

Henry. [Aside] Unconsciously you're very near
the truth ;
For real life has hardy heroines
And beauty greater than that set in books.
[Aloud] No, no, I read no novels now—in fact,
I hardly find the necessary time.

Alice. What a relief ! This fear is off my
mind !

Now I'll be merry; be you merry too!
Don't look so very stupid, Henry, please;
What will my mother think of you?

Ida. My child, you must be just; you do not know

The many things that sometimes trouble men.
We can't be always merry.

Alice. He has been,
Why can't he be so now? If he has troubles
I must share them—it's my sacred right.
[To *Henry*] And I insist on it, I want to know,
Or make more trouble for you, sir!

Henry. Ah, well !
Here is a willful little chatterbox !
My earnest thoughts but touched prosaic busi-
ness.

Alice. Even so, it is my business still!
But let that pass. You keep your gloomy
thoughts,
And tell me something sweet.

Henry. In you I could

Find subjects sweet enough if I might find
Words fit to picture one too good for earth.

Alice. Shall I take wings and fly away to
heaven?

If I were safely there what would you do
Without your little prattler?

Ida. Don't, my child!

Pray, tell me something of your life in school.

Henry. Yes, do so, dear, I must go to my work,
And, Alice, pray for my success this time.

Alice. That I'll do willingly, with cheerful
heart;

If it depends on that, then you may hope,
For my best wishes always go with you.

[*Exit Henry.*]

What can he mean? He truly frightened
me!

Ida. I cannot tell you, child, at least not now.

Alice. If you know all, then there can be no
wrong.

Ida. Yet for all that he acted a strange part;
I must confess I cannot fathom him.

You're much attached to him, 'tis clearly seen:
Your love seems even stronger than his own.

Alice. Yes, mother dear, my love is without
bounds;

With every fiber of my heart I love!

He'll marry me as soon as he has won
The battle for the money that he needs ;
And though his struggle lasted ten long years,
Or longer still, I faithfully could wait.

Ida. O, what a little foolish girl you are,
My hopeful child ! Just let me tell you now
That all these hopes are built on shifting sand,
And both of you are children—nothing more.

Alice. I know his talent, and I do not doubt
His triumph.

Ida. Child, your foolishness must cease.
'Tis hard your dreams should vanish, but they
must.

You'll soon have grown a woman.

Alice. Yes, I know.
Yet, if I do, can't I then marry him ?
He often swore he could but live with me.
Why should I kill him when I love him so ?

Ida. Men do not die of that peculiar ill.
How many have thus spoken to your mother !
Most of them, I think, are still alive.

Alice. They're not like him, he never told a lie.

Ida. O, foolish child, think something of your
future !

Alice. He's my future, he's my guiding star,
And I shall follow him through dark or light.
From earliest years we have each other loved :

There is no truer, dearer lad than he.
We played together, and he guarded me.
When I was ill he watched for many nights
Faithfully at my bedside, reading tales,
And in the morning he went off to work.
Whenever it was sought to make him cease,
He cried, I know, as if his heart would break.
Why should I turn from such a love as that?

Ida. You take too seriously, my dearest child,
What young men say. They are not always
true,

And like to fly from flower to other flower.

Alice. I can't distrust him, and I never will :
Distrust him is like doubting of my life ;
He is my all, and I can trust in him.
He is romantic—who finds fault with that ?—
But that he's false I never can believe.
And even if he ceased to love but me,
I should resign to give my Henry joy
Were my own heart to break in the attempt !

Ida. O Alice, how sublime, how good you are !
I am ashamed to have you tortured, child.
Forgive me—I will try to set aright
That which I've turned. Now go and see your
room,
How gayly I have dressed it for my girl ;
I'll get some flowers and soon will join you there.

Alice. But first give me a hearty, hearty kiss!

[*Exit Alice.*

Ida. Shall I be treacherous to my only child,
And undermine the bliss that fills her heart?
Must I not spare her such a fate as mine,
And let her worldly welfare be the aim
That solely is to be considered now?
Or shall I leave her in her happy dream,
And thereby drag her to a certain doom?
But will her heart not break if I refuse
To give consent to such a luckless match?
Have I a right, then, to deny her that
For which I paid so dear? Is there no hope?
Can't Henry save us? He has said he would,
Though I don't see how he can meet the task.
He lacks, it seems, not courage nor good-will,
Yet some essential to complete success.
But I will act myself, will try once more
With all my might to move West's stubborn mind.
If I should tell him of their mutual love,
He cannot love or well demand a wife
Who could but hate him, though he turn her heart
From all she loved and ever cherished there.
God give me strength for this, my last attempt,
And bless me in my fight for my dear child!

[*Exit Ida.*

ACT II.

SCENE I. *Entrance to West's Private Office.*

George. O, save yourself the trouble, Jack, my boy,

You'll try in vain to move that fat old sinner.

Jack. I must risk it, George; my poor wife's life

Depends on the result.

George. I wish you luck! [Aside] I'm sorry for his wife;

If it depends on West, her life is lost.

[*Exit George.*]

SCENE II. *West's Private Office.*

Jack. Good-morning, sir; if I do not intrude, I'd like to ask a moment of your time.

West. What is it, Jack? Come to the point!

You know

I can't afford to make a waste of time,
For time is money.

Jack. Yes, I will be short.

The thing is this: I need a trifle, sir,
To buy some wine and meat for my sick wife.
The doctor's fees, the medicine, and all

The many little things that must be paid
Have swept away the little that I saved,
And now—

West. You think that I shall be in haste
To offer you my purse, to be a fool !
You're sadly wrong, my friend ; times are too
hard :

I could not spare a cent just now if 'twere
To save a soul. In fact, if truth were known
To all, I sacrificed myself for you.
Instead of living on my revenues
I put my cash in these eonfounded mills,
To give your people work, improve your state,
To make you more content, to show you all
What generous men can do. I did my best,
And now I'm on the brink of ruin, Jack.

Jack. I thought that everything went very
well,
Because at present we work day and night.

West. The more the pity ! For my sleepless
nights,
For all the anguish of a feeling heart,
I have no profits, and, I fear, no thanks.

Jack. Think of my dying wife, my children
poor !
What will become of them if they're bereft
Of her ? Think—

West. Yes, I do think, Jack. Of what? I think now of a time six years ago: You borrowed money from a friend of yours To wed your wife. I said the day would come When you would rue that foolish step. You langhed.

Now it has eome! You've hungry children, Jack, And a sick wife. Is it my fault or yours? With wanton, reckless wish for worldly joys You've ruined your life—ruined their lives, too. Here, look at me! You did not see me marry, Though I could afford it ere bad luck Had made me buy these money-eating mills.

Jack. You can deduct it from my wages, but For God's sake, sir, give me some money now!

West. I pity you, but, as I've plainly said, I cannot spare a cent.

Jack. O, what a world!

West. Be silent! do not dare to curse this world!

Against me you may turn, but don't rebel Against the Maker of this best of worlds!

Jack. O sir, you will not drive to desperation One who's served you faithfully for years! Grant me this favor, or, by God—

West. Be quiet! [To entering Porter] What do you want?

Porter. The superintendent wants to see you, and

He says it is on urgent business, sir.

West. Then let him enter. [To *Jack*] Jack, you may retire :

I pardon you this mad, unholy wrath.

Jack. If my wife dies you shall repent this hour !

[*Exeunt Jack and Porter.*]

Enter HENRY.

West. You saw this fellow Jack come out of here :

As soon as possible discharge that man.

Henry. He is a faithful man ; what will he do ? He has no money, and cannot be idle.

West. Let him hang himself : it helps his views

About this world among the growling mob !

Henry. Beware, you might be sealing your own doom !

West. No, I'm just sealing my own banknote-packs.

Henry. When arguments are scarce, display your gold !

West. Possession of it is no crime as yet.

Shall I be ostracized because I'm rich ?

Henry. Shall they be crowded down because they're poor?

West. They are oppressors, never the oppressed;

They do not care for justice or for law.

Henry. Unjust they may be, but no more than you;

They may be lawless, but no more than you;

Your actions don't inspire respect for law,

And it is you who breed this lawlessness.

If law were founded on eternal truth,

It could be taken as the safest guide;

But it knows naught of moral right or wrong—

In spite of law you've bested brawn and brain.

West. Ungrateful men alone can speak like you.

Henry. Shades of the dead inventors, rise and see

The princely fortunes made by Plutocrats

Who sold your brains, and let you go to law

To gain a trifle of your own creation,

Then behold your murky paupers' graves—

The monuments of rich men's gratitnde,

The proud mementoes of the mighty law

Which would have done you justice, had you lived

To follow patiently its tedious course;

And then subdue all feelings of revenge,
But bless and praise this great Plutocracy !

West. It gets along without a special blessing.

Henry. You're protected ! Who protects your men ?

The government fights only for the rich,
And leaves the poor to battle for themselves.
To-day the workingman is at your mercy !

West. We take care of him as best we can.

Henry. A noble duty to protect the poor !

What higher mission can there be in life ?
You can make thousands happy and content ;
Your life will be a curse if you refuse.
It's greater to be loved than to rouse hate !

West. I do not mind the hate or love of men ;
I run these mills to please myself alone.

Henry. Don't go too far, do not imbitter them,
Don't try to starve them into meek despair.
If you don't heed the spirit of the times
Two formidable armies will arise—
United poverty, united wealth :
Their final clashing is a certainty,
The peaceful struggle will become a war,
And then the outcome cannot be in doubt.

West. The tyranny of ignorance is death,
And may I die before I see its dawn !

Henry. Who speaks of tyranny? You fear too much!

West. Do not enlighten me as to my men—I know them well; they've taught me how to aet. Throw but a crumb to the most vicious cur, It licks your hand to show its gratitude. Not so your noble-minded workingman: He is above such silly sentiment. With tiger's wrath he tears the proffering hand; He knows no feeling and he shows no thought, And strike and boyeott are his arguments!

Henry. They learned from you to use such arguments.

West. When they went out on strike some years ago, And everything was left to waste and rot, When through malevolence a million fell, They boastingly proclaimed it a great deed. If I refuse to pay more than agreed It's called a crime, capitalistie theft!

Henry. What you agree to is compelled from them!

West. Now, every one is molder of his fate—He is the product of his own exertions. Persevering genins will prevail. They want to own what others built, they put A premium on mediocriety.

O, what a vision of their future state,
With Mr. Walking Delegate as king,
That prince of impudencie and laziness,
That most exacting, most despotic lord.
O, what a travesty on liberty !
And how all brainy men would ever pray
For the returning of that glorious reign
Of what they're pleased to call Plutocracy !
Plutocracy ! that feeds the millions who
Are forging weapons to destroy their peers.
Plutocracy ! whose freedom's unsurpassed,
Which makes the earth a real paradise.

Henry. For all the allies of the Plutocrats !

West. Yes, money, might, and merit, hand in
hand :

Tear them apart, and what will then remain ?
What have ambitious men to battle for ?
Their masses, mediocrity, and meanness
Can't appeal to men like you and me.

Henry. It seems that nothing can appeal to
you.

West. I want to be the master in my house :
I own it, no one else, and I will rule !
And if they want to strike, I am prepared.
Woe to the fools who dare to cross my path !
Enough of this. Now let's to your affairs.
What may it be, young man ?

Henry. It is of great importance, sir ; I try
To win my happiness and that of friends.

West. I'm satisfied you should, my honored
sir,

But what has that to do with me, I beg ?

Henry. More than I wish ! For, if I must
confess,

You are the one who's standing in my way.

West. Be plain : I'm no expert in raving, sir ;
If you expect a higher salary,

Just say so, and I'll pay it willingly.

At present I can't well dispense with you.

Henry. It is not that ! 'Tis that you want to
take

What is to me most beautiful on earth !

West. Young man, explain ! 'Twould scarce
be worth my while
To take from you the little you possess.

Henry. I have no wealth, but mine's at least a
heart

Which all the money of the world can't buy !

West. It is not strange that you possess a
heart,

But so do I and all our fellow-men ;

And as to buying hearts, you can be calm.

Henry. No, I cannot, for you have plainly
dared

To try and buy, like vulgar money's worth,
The heart of Alice Field, my bride.

West. What? Alice Field? Your bride?

Henry. Is it so strange?

West. Yes, strange indeed, for I am her
betrothed!

Henry. You her betrothed? Don't you pre-
sume too much?

She never loved you, and she never will.

Her heart is mine, and I won't part with it.

You're warned: leave her alone! Gold is not all!
If need, we still have laws.

West. Yes, laws enough,
And a society that does prevent
All cruelty to animals and such.
What have you to complain of? Pray go on,
I am the president of that relief.

Henry. A worthy president!

West. I'm glad you think so. But to our own
case:

It still remains to see who is to blame—
I, who will strew her path with roses fair,
Or you, who with your love will without fail
Drag Alice on to darkest misery.

Is that your love? I never loved like that!

Henry. How can you speak of love, a man like
you,

With such a withered, selfish, stony heart?
Care not for me: I'm young, and my whole life
Will be devoted to her happiness.

West. But you can fail, and, I might add, you will.

Henry. Is this a threat?

West. Take it for what you please.

Henry. But I defy you: yours she'll never be.

A man like you, long past the prime of life,
Wants yet a youthful angel for his wife?

West. If I am old, and if my end is near,
'Tis but a reason more she should be mine,
And more so as 'tis rather doubtful now
That I'll enjoy sweet angels' company
When I am dead. If you can check your love
And wait till then, you'll have a widow fair
And millions yet into the bargain.

Henry. No,
Not for a minute shall the girl be yours.
Beware, if you persist in the attempt.

West. I must, it is too late, I can't go back;
There is too much invested in this thing,
And now I want to reap the profits due.

Henry. You heartless wretch! Can you
expect a girl
To love a man who—

West. Is in love with her,
Has no good looks, but plenty of good cash?
Of course I do! 'Twill take some time, I think,
But I am patient, and you ought to know
That it takes more than love to be content.
Ask Mrs. Field.

Henry. Don't dare to speak of her!
Whate'er she's done, she's but a woman, weak,
And you have planned your worst to make her feel
The great, the cruel pains life has in store
For those who well deserved its choicest joys.
She is as high above you—

West. As the stars.
You're right, she is a very pretty witch,
Much prettier than Alice. Were I you
I should propose to her. She is still young,
And—

Henry. One word more, try but to speak in jest
Of her whom I respect, whom I'll protect
Against such creeping snakes as I deem you—
Say one word more, and I'll do something, sir,
That could not well be undone.

West. I'll be still;
But pray keep cool, and let's not come to blows:
Such exercise does not agree with me.

Henry. I see that naught can move this cynic
wretch!

West. Just what I thought myself; but be so kind

And move yourself: I'm rather busy, sir—

Henry. I go, for I can't hope.

West. Why not, sir, pray? Why can't you hope—who will prevent you, friend?

Hope, by all means; for hope is happiness.

Henry. I'm done with you! Henceforth it shall be war,

War to the knife!

West. So be it! To the knife!

[*Exit Henry.*]

All seems against me, but I'm not the man
To now retreat, to calmly take defeat
When I'm so near my aim. I will not tire;
I'll fight it out as if it were for life!
Is't only young men's privilege to love?
Have I not loved? Did I not meet defeat
Through one whom I at last ran down? Ah, yes!
Have I not waited through these many years
To win the daughter when I lost the mother?
Jove, I swear that she shall yet be mine!
The fool seemed much more ardently in love
With Ida than with Alice. His quick wrath
Betrayed him plainly. This might be of use:
At least I'll try. The charms of Ida Field

Might make an angel fall: I'll watch them both.
 I know she hates me. And if all means fail
 The pinch of want can tame the stoutest hearts.
 I have no time to lose, I'll go to work
 At once; there is too much at stake.

Enter PORTER.

Porter. A lady—Mrs. Field.

West. Is welcome here
 [Exit *Porter.*]

Enter IDA.

West. By Jove! 'tis really you, my charming
 friend;
 You come to see me—that's indeed surprise!
 But nowadays all joys are crowding me.
 If I were vain, without humility,
 I'd think you were in love with me at last.
 'Tis but of rare occurrence that we meet;
 This is the first time I have seen you here.

Ida. The first, and, I will hope, the last time
 too;
 But I've not come to be tormented, West.
West. Does love for me torment you?
Ida. No, not that!
West. I'm sorry for it! What a fool I am!
 How could I think she was in love with me

When she has such a young and dashing lad
Who loves her to complete distraction.

Ida. Stop !

This is too much ! Do not insult me, sir !

West. Why, don't you know a Mr. Henry,
friend ?

Ida. And if I do ? What can you say of him ?

West. He only swore to me he loved—admired,
Adored you, would protect and rescue you.

He nearly broke my nose for you alone.

If that's not love, why, tell me, what, then, is ?

Ida. It is a lie, the basest you've yet told.
In this you can't so easily deceive :
I know that Henry loves my little girl.

West. I won't say that's a lie, but I do doubt.
He spoke of Alice too—'twas tamely, though,
Whereas for you he was all fire and flame.
Perhaps this goes to prove he loves you both,
And rather than lose either he'd take two,
And travel on to Salt Lake's famous town.
Tis not a bad idea ! He shows wit !
His taste, indeed, is better than his ways.

Ida. Pray, save the trouble of insulting him ;
Your labor's lost on me. I did not come
To hear my friends besmirched and jeered by you ;
But I have come to tell you, once for all,
You must resign all hope of claiming her.

You cannot force her to become your wife,
And I would rather die than aid such force.
'Twould be her death. She does love Henry, and
No power on earth could put her love in doubt ;
I've tried it once, but utterly in vain.

West. That test remains to be more fully
made :

There are so many ways which lead to Rome.
But, verily, I'm sorry for this man !
His immorality is truly sad !
I must discharge him, bring him to himself—
I owe't to you and to my fellow-men.

Ida. Beware, let Henry stay ! For once be
kind !

West. Be kind ! Who ever taught me to be
kind ?

Has ever any one been kind to me ?
From early childhood days I've been abused,
Been trampled on and kicked, despised and
shunned.

For what ? Because I was a nameless waif.
If kindness could be bred by cruel blows
I should be kind, but it cannot, my friend ;
'Tis mockery to say to me : Be kind !

Ida. Go not too far with this ; restrain your
hate.

West. Don't speak of hate ; the word is sinister.

Don't call an ugly child by ugly names :
Speak rather of my duty—that is plain.
It is my duty to remove this man.

Moreover, I must warn all righteous folks
That such a man is dangerous to employ.

Ida. Pray, spare him ! Rather vent your
wrath on me,

And let this pair enjoy their blissful dream.

West, live a better life, God is not dead !

Fear His rebuke ! Though He waits patiently,
If once the measure be too full, He then
Can strike you but the harder for your sins.

West. I don't believe my measure to be full ;
It can still hold a goodly draught, I think :
If it runs over through a fault of mine,
I've been a blockhead, and I'll humbly bow
To whatsoever is by Fate decreed.
But I feel very well just now, my dear,
In expectation of my happiness.

I am quite sure you will not cross my path,
For if you help this wild and daring man
You are in danger too ; my righteous duty
Then extends to you and yours as well.
And, verily, 'twould be a lasting shame
When two such beauties had to beg for alms.
May Heaven but turn a thing so sad to see.

Ida. You know too well my vulnerable point !

You know it is not for myself I fear ;
 You know you hurt me most in those I love ;
 You know it, scoundrel, far too well ; you use
 The fact to further all your wicked schemes.
 May God forgive, but I cannot forgive—
 I can't suppress my hate, 'twill choke me here !
 I must give vent to it, and if by words
 I could now kill you, 'twould be joy for me
 Were I for years to suffer and repent.
 Ah, my poor Alice, must it come to that ?
 God ! canst Thou leave us in this demon's grasp ?
 If we are tried on earth so hard, O Lord,
 Then even heaven itself cannot console.

West. How beautiful, how ravishingly grand !
 I never saw such beauty in my life !
 You are sublime, an angel still in wrath !
 And if, then, Alice loves this raving fool,
 I'll let them marry, if you'll be my wife.

Ida. At this price, no ! For I would rather die
 Than marry you ! I loathe you so.

West. You do ?
 I then shall stick to Alice, if I must :
 Then you're at least my handsome, doting mother,
 Who will have me for a loving son.
 As for that coy, reluctant love of hers,
 I think that I can win it quite alone
 If you will promise not to interfere

And not to tell her all about the past.
I do not need your help—I'm strong enough,
And know the arts of little love-affairs.

Ida. It tears my heart. I promise to obey ;
But if you harm a hair on Henry's head
You will repent the hour—for in that boy
I see a manly faith, a noble soul.
I'd find no rest if any harm met him.

West. I'll harm no hair on your dear Henry's
head,
O no, not one ! Though well he'd spare one hair.
Don't be afraid, I will not pluck his hair :
Except for him and you it has no value.

Ida. Wicked monster, how I hate you now !
More than I ever hated you before ;
And more than you and all on earth can hate !
But 'tis in vain ; therefore I go and leave
My curse tenthousandfold with you !

West. A single hearty one will do, my dear ;
If not, relieve yourself, do not mind me.
I am forgiving—you ought to forgive,
Or you will go to the fifth steep in hell,
As sings the poet of infernal deeps.

[*Exit Ida.*

Ah, what a woman ! What a marvelous gem !
Were all like her, I could admire the sex !
I've hated her, and she deserved my hate ;

But had I hated her as she believes,
 She would not be among the living now.
 With all my fiery hate I've loved her wildly—
 Whieh the most, the devil only knows ;
 Yet be it what it may, be't love or hate,
 She is my only heiress ; when I'm dead
 My gold may heal the wounds which hate in-
 flicts.
 And it is hers by that which fools call right.
 Her husband was my partner : at the start
 He had the money, I, experience ;
 Before he died the tables were just turned,
 He had experience, I had the rest.

[*Exit West.*

SCENE III. *A Factory Yard.*

Henry. Yes, Jack, 'tis true ! You are to be
 discharged.

But I will try my best to keep you here.
 Still, in the meantime, look for other work.
 He would not listen to my warm remonstrance,
 All my words in your behalf were lost.

Jack. Then I can't even hope for other work.
 What did he tell you ?

Henry. Jaek, leave that untold.

Jack. But why not speak ? I shan't expect too
 much :

Tell me the truth ; perhaps it might relieve
To know the worst that can be said of me.

Henry. Well, Jack, he said that you might
hang yourself—

Illustrate thus your views about this world
Among the growling mob !

Jack. I thought as much.

A pleasant man, a kind of humorist.

So I should hang myself—a good advice :
The man is right, it's not a bad idea.

Henry. I tell you this for your own good,
friend Jack,

To show you there's no hope of help from him.

You know I have no power to keep you here ;
I am a slave myself as much as you.

If I could help you, Jack, it should be done,
But I won't stay here longer than yourself.

I may be forced to leave this place to-day ;
And willingly my steps shall turn, for here,
Where wrong and evil gain the victory,
Is no good place for honest, feeling men.

Yet don't despair, and hope for better days !

Jack. I won't despair. There must be yet a
God.

Good-bye ! [Exit Jack.]

Henry. Unhappy Jack ! Unhappy man !
Oppressed, enslaved, and toiling all your life—

One long-continued struggle for your bread.
And still the want of that disturbs your sleep,
And fills your soul with bitter mental woe.
Your independence is a flimsy sham !
Is this the much-blessed freedom you enjoy ?
Cursed liberty, this liberty—to die !

ACT III.

SCENE I. *Room in Mrs. Field's House.*

Ida. I knew your efforts would most surely fail ;
And I have had not more success than you.
West promised nothing more than that he would
Spare me the painful task of helping him.
I won't be sacrificed, won't marry one
Who has destroyed and wrecked my happy home.

Henry. Is he still there to plague you with his love ?
Is he still there to lift his eyes to you ?
Let him but try to yet prolong the strife,
And he shall fight with me for life or death.
Across my body lies the way to you ;
No other man shall ever own your heart !

Ida. This tone, sir—God, what are the words
I hear ?

Henry. I know you hate him ; if you say the word
I'll kill him.

Ida. You can talk of murder, then ?
O, think of heaven ; may God forgive you, sir !

Henry. With you is heaven, without you—hell !
For one embrace, for one touch of your lips,
I'd willingly forego eternity !

Ida. Sir, you are mad !

Henry. Yes, and I know I'm mad.
But is not our whole life an insane dream ?
What do we live for if 'tis not for joy ?
From birth till death we hunt for paradise,
And mine, I think, I've found in you at last !

[*Embraces Ida.*

Ida. O, leave me, leave me, that I may forgive
While I still can. I must not, will not hate,
And only pity stirs within my breast.

Henry. Do I need pity ? Do not pity me.
No, no ! For I now hold you in my arms !
No future joy or terror moves me now :
The eup of joy has touched my eager lips ;
Then let me drink it, drink it to the dregs,
And I will gladly die !

Ida. Now leave me, leave me, or I'll cry for
help.

If words can't move you, think of Aliee !

Henry. [Releasing her]

Ah !

What have I done in madman recklessness ?
Forgiving guardian angel, help me, help !
To think I should so shamelessly betray
The confidence of one so sweet and pure !
In passion I have torn the flower I held,
And now, too late, there is no power to save !

[Rushes out of the room.]

Ida. O, wherefore was I born ? What fate is
mine ?

Why did this deadly beauty come to me ?
Why was I made unwillingly a tool
Of dire destruction ? O, thou much-prized gift,
What hast thou wrought to me but misery
And endless woe ? Unruly passions hast
Thou kindled in men's breasts, hast blindly led
Them to dread deeds, or even crime, for me !
O fatal beauty ! Is this all thou gainest ?
Then be cursed by me, be cursed and cursed !

Enter WEST.

West. Why, my fair friend, in tears again so
soon ?

Your well of weeping overflows to-day.
Now, Ida, do not weep, it spoils your looks,
And no admirer of your matchless charms
Would like to see such sad calamity.

Ida. If weeping only could destroy the spell,
I might be tempted to uneasing tears.
Once more my fatal gift has wrought its worst
In one who but for this was truly good ;
And though he's wronged us both, I pardon him—
I only pray that he may yet return
To that true love by which he was inspired.

West. Ah ! then what I foretold has come to
pass.

Now tell me : was I wrong in what I said ?

Ida. I never thought of it, should never
doubt

But for this scene. It is a fearful truth.
For God's sake, don't let Aliee know this, West,
Or I shall tell her of your life and deeds.

West. No fear of that ; keep but your promise,
dear.

I knew 'twould come, I hardly ever err.
I know my men—but one unguarded word
Reveals to me their deepest, inmost thoughts,
Reveals their strength and all their weakness too.
To this I owe my great success in life :
It is a precious gift, my stock in trade.
That he's out of the way to me, I vow,
Is tidings of a truly welcome kind.

Ida. No doubt of that ; I know that you hate
him.

West. I hate him? No, I am in love with him.
Did I not call him fool, and has he not
But proved himself quite worthy of the name?
Hate him? What nonsense! It would be too
much

To hate all those who might be in my way.
I only can despise them, but not hate;
And if I trample over hearts or heads,
'Tis but as if I trample over worms,
For hatred never moves me to rebuke.
Hated I have but one. You are the one.
And you I never could despise.

Ida. My thanks.

Yes, many thanks, that even you admit
You've found in me one worthy of your hate.
This is, indeed, a flattering remark,
And truly gratifying to my heart.
Your haughty tone cannot deceive me, West,
You're void of every noble thought or wish.
I am a woman with a tender heart—
Could never look unmoved on others' pains.

West. Yes, yes, you have a tender heart, my
dear;
Especially does it soften for this youth.
To see me suffer would not give you pain.

Ida. Why should I wince to see a scoundrel
writhe?

West. That's right, my friend, let's play to the old tune,

Else we might grow too sentimental ; yet
If I have been your devil, you were mine,
With all your angel's face and angel's form.
That which I am I am through you.

Ida. That stab

You've given me before ; but you are wrong :
This cowardly excuse your meanness shows ;
For I believe that love ennobles men,
And you are just the opposite of all
That I call noble in the sterner sex.

West. Perhaps I am, your standard is so high.
But what's that now ? We'll let bygones be gone.
I came to see my girl ; I came to win
Her for my wife. Where is our darling pet ?

Ida. Then you will win my child without my help ?

In faith, it makes me laugh to think of it.
She is strong proof against your golden rain,
For gifts and honeyed words can't buy her heart.

West. Who told you, then, that I would buy with gifts ?

Ida. Perhaps you may rely on other charms,
But I confess they have not yet appeared.

West. Yes, they were lost on you, 'tis but too true.

Why do you think they must be lost on her?

Ida. I only think that even you grow childish.
Luck attend you; may you win the game.
But take good care, do not flame up in love:
The heavenly fire might burn your brittle heart!

West. Pray save your laugh till you have seen
the end,
And do not be too playfully inclined,
Lest malice yet might bear ill fruit. Take care!

Where shall I find my Alice?

Ida. While we spoke
I heard her sing: she must be in the house.

West. Then I will go and find out where she is,
And let us see who'll win the weighty war.

[*Exit West.*]

Ida. How can he win her? Surely not by
foree.
To mention what he heard he dares not do,
And if he did he'll find there no belief.
Yet I did wrong to thus exite his wrath;
He wore an ugly smile when now he left.
But let us hope the best. These erushing scenes
Have filled my cup of sorrow to the brim.
May Heaven reveal the way to save the lad,
Reveal the way to save my child and him.

[*Exit Ida.*]

SCENE II. *Music-room in Mrs. Field's House.*

Alice. [Singing]

O, I am as happy
As birds are in spring;
I delight to be merry,
I gambol and sing.

And why not be merry?
The world is so fair.
Begone every dark look,
Begone every care!

The rain may bestrew us,
But the clouds must soon part;
The world is all sunlight,
For Love's in my heart.

Enter WEST.

West. You're always merry, Alice, and why not?

Why should we be morose, to all a plague,
While life with all its untold charms and joys
Still smiles on us? Why should we see the dark
Where in reality all is but light
And happiness? Wherefore complain and sigh?

Let others pine in feigned, unreal grief,
But let us sing, let us be always gay.

Alice. So let it be, dear uncle ; it is right
That we should sing while we are happy yet ;
And let us wish to every one good-luck :
And down with every sorrow. Let us pray
That all the world be blessed as we are blessed.

West. So be it. Let us wish good-luck and
cheer
To all with grief oppressed ; and thou, sweet Love,
Who rules supreme the vast domain of life,
To thee we bow, to thee, a god, we sing.

Alice. O, how I pity those who do not love,
And are not loved by loved ones in return,
For they are poor if they were doubly rich.
How rich I am in love, how rich, how rich,
And loved by all.

West. And not the least by me.

Alice. And I am truly thankful for it, uncle ;
So will mother be, for she loves all
Who love me and were kind to me in school.
How I love her, that I can only feel,
And never tell.

West. In that, my dear, you're right.
If ever life's dark clouds should cross your path,
And if in hours of trial courage fails,
If you cry loud to God to send relief,

To help you in your hours of agony,
Look to your mother then—in her you'll find
More love and help than all the angels give.

Alice. Dear uncle, I believe you. It is so.

West. I will not make you sad, my pet, not
now.

But you cannot requite her faithful love ;
No sacrifice of yours can pay the debt,
That debt is over great. She's suffered much,
But out of all she came a victor brave.
And all for you. I will not now recount ;
It takes too long, and makes me shake with
pain.

Alice. What do you mean, dear uncle ?

West. Let it rest,
My dearest child ; let that rest undisturbed
Deep in my breast. 'Tis best. And, so God help,
'Tis dead forevermore, not to revive.
Therefore, my dear, don't speak of it to her,
But help to make her all forget by love.

Alice. To do this, uncle, shall now be my ainn,
And I am thankful that I know of this.

West. I know your heart, and knew that it
would prompt

To help me to your mother's happiness.
That is one reason why I tell this tale
Of suffering and woe. Her fate is mine.

My life I have devoted to her good,
Her sorrows have been mine, and, so God help,
Her joys shall yet be mine.

Alice. You are too kind!

What a dear friend you've ever been to us.

[Kisses West.

West. Nothing of me, I pray you; leave me out.

What I have done was done with cheerful heart:
Nothing of me, let that not trouble you.
I always stood alone in this wide world,
And shall thus to my end stand quite alone,
A solitary tree, bent down by grief.

But such is life ; for others mine is spent,
And never did I win a smile from love.

Yet I'm content, for I have love deserved;
If 'twas denied 'twas hard, but—let it be.

Alice. And were you loved by none, you're
loved by me. *[Kisses West.]*

West. That is my only consolation, child.
I have much loved. I have been very selfish.
Once I thought I could possess the one
Who has been life to me—your mother, dear.
It could not be: she loved another man,
And she was right. I yielded cheerfully,
For, as it seems, I was not born for love.
Love is a gift of Heaven, cannot be bought,

It must be freely given to have worth.
This boon has been denied to me.

Alice.

O no!

My uncle dear, my love is not enforeed.

[*Kisses West.*

West. Why do I speak of that? And why
complain?

Am I not aeting like a tiresome prattler?

Pray excuse me, dear, and to return:

Your mother married; I stood wathching her,
And wished her all the happiness on earth.

But even that has been denied to me—

To find my happiness recast in hers.

Her husband left her friendless and alone,
And never saw his wife or child again.

Alice. My poor, unhappy, patient mother!

West.

Yes,

For poor she was: no friend to give her help,
And left to face the world with her weak child—
Alone to fight the battle of this life.

It was a fearful sight, hard to behold.

No hope was dawning on her tear-dimmed eyes,
But she looked up to Him, and Heaven befriended.

I was watching her with loving eye.

O, what a joy to me to have the means
To banish care and all the fears of want!
Her mental grief I never could appease;

Oft have I tried, but I have tried in vain,
And not to me this boon was to be sent.
But I believe that she'll be happy yet,
And that at last her fearful trials end.
O, how I wish her this time better luck !

Alice. Then 'tis to you we owe all that we have.

O, was there ever such a generous soul
As yours, my dearest, dearest Uncle West !
Can any love of mine wipe out such debts ?

[*Kisses West.*]

West. Nothing of me, my child. Be quite assured

'Tis only for your mother's sake I speak,
To show you how she has deserved your love.
But how it gladdens my old foolish heart,
To feel quite sure that she'll be happy yet,
That she has found a man whom she can love.

Alice. You speak in riddles, uncle. Tell me all.

My mother said no word about a lover,
Gave no hint about a marriage.

West. Has never hint been given ? That is strange !

But O, I see, she'll take you by surprise,
Or it may be she does not like to tell—
It might not prove entirely welcome news.

Alice. Yes, that might be the case ; I can see that ;

But nothing ever could hurt me that might Give her some happiness. If this be true, I wish her all the good which life can grant.

West. Of course 'tis true, your mother told me so.

I have no doubt they will be happy, and In their joy I shall find my happiness. Then I can die in peace, then is my aim Attained. In truth, I have not lived in vain.

Alice. O, how sublime, how nobly true you are !

But who is he that steals my mother's hand ?

West. A worthy, noble, honest, manly man : In everything the acme of perfection. True as gold—I've sounded him myself. O, had he not been worthy of her love, I should not be so glad ; I'd have to blame Myself forevermore. But I am sure They are the best matched pair I ever saw.

Alice. Who is this happy man ? Do not delay. Are you afraid ? Why not divulge his name ?

West. You know him well, my little pet. This man

Is your own friend as well, he told me so. And you'll be glad to have him for a father.

Alice. No, I do not know him, 'tis too bad.
I'm mystified. Don't keep me in suspense !

West. But you know Henry, your old friend
and playmate.

Alice. He ! Is he the man of whom you speak ?
It cannot be ! O God, it cannot be !

West. Darling, you frighten me ! Yes, it is he.
But what is that to us ?

Alice. You ask me what ?
O God, it cannot be, it cannot be !
He and my mother ! No, it cannot be !
Speak, uncle, speak, it cannot be ! No, no !

West. It is the truth. But, child, what do you
care ?

You make me feel quite wretched ; truth, you do.

Alice. It cannot be, O, say, it cannot be !
He is my lover, he belongs to me,
To me alone—to me belongs his heart,
And I alone have sacred rights in him.
O uncle, tell me ! Speak ! It cannot be !

West. What have I done ? unhappy wretch I
am !

This man your lover ? Heaven forgive my act !
I can't forgive myself—a dreadful thing !
O God ! Why did I speak ? What have I done ?
My child, my darling, can you pardon me ?
What I have done, I did with good intent ;

But I must always fail. O, mother poor,
This last stroke is your death-blow, nothing
less !

But here I swear I will revenge you both.
He'll pay this with his life, the traitor he !
'Tis now an eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.
Now all my dreams of happiness are gone,
And grief will bend me down. I am a wreck !
Unhappy child ! But thrice unhappy mother !
God, forgive the sin ! I must be off !
I'll kill him—

Alice. No, you shall not take his life.
No, uncle, stay. Stay, do not make it worse,
And leave me not in my heart's agony,
But counsel me, and tell me what to do.
O, my poor heart, it is thy doom to break !
Thou canst not long endure such raging pain.
It is too hard—this sudden leap from heaven
Into the depths of dark despair and woe !
O poor, O foolish heart ! Why dost rebel
Against thy fate ? Why wilt thou break with
grief ?

Be calm, be calm as if in death ! Be calm !
So all my hopes are buried in despair :
So young, so full of life, and so unhappy !
Robbed of all, of all that I have cherished.
God ! it is too hard ! It is too hard !

West. Despairing grief, burst forth ! Break
all the bonds !

Cry up to Heaven for but one ray of hope.
Alas, there is no hope ! 'Tis done, 'tis done !
My darling, do not weep, do not despair,
Or you will break my aching heart in two.
You are still young, life will yet heal your wounds ;
But when I think of her who bore you, child,
Then I am lost. For her I fear the worst ;
For her 'twill be heart-rending agony.
Give her this wound with all the wounds she
bears,

And it will surely kill her. Think of this.
O, had I but the wretch here in my hands,
I'd tear his lying heart out of his breast.
Rage overpowers me—I'll look for him.

Alice. No, uncle, do not harm him, but stay
here.

Let him alone : his heart has been misled.
And where's the man who will not love my mother.
Can resist her charming gentleness
And her angelic beauty ? He's not born.
Let him be happy if he can be so.
Now I can understand his sullen grief.
He felt his wrong, O, poor, poor boy !

West.

Withal

Could you excuse him still ? How strange this is !

Don't think your mother did the mischief, girl.
By all the powers in heaven and on this earth,
I swear that she is innoeent of all !

Do not blame her—

Alice. Blame her ? What do yon think ?
Should I deseend to give my mother blame ?
If she had told me all when I arrived
'Twould have been better ; but I let that pass.
Why should she not admire him—him so good ?
Yet, I ean see 'twas he who lost himself.
I know his sudden passions, his wild love
For all that's beautiful, for all that's great.
I pardon him. May they be happy long.
I will resign, and see them still as one,
Then I will die.

West. Say not that word, my child.
A noble soul ! You've conquered your own heart,
You've won the greatest battle ever fought.
You shall not die ! Think but of me, my pet,
Whose only hope, whose only joy you are.
A common grief has bound us in one bond,
And I will try to keep the trust God gave.
I'll be your father, mother, husband—all !

Alice. I only say I thank you, uncle dear ;
Pray show me now the way, and show me light.
I cannot break the subject to them now.
How, uncle, shall I meet them after this ?

West. Be quiet, and conceal your heart's fierce pain.

Don't speak about the dreadful case to them—
It is too painful for both sides, my dear—
And leave the rest to me. We'll fly to Europe
On the swiftest ship that rides the seas :
Among new men, among new scenery
You'll be my merry little pet again.

Alice. Your pet I'll be, but merry—no, not that.

West. O, we shall see. I shall dispel the cloud
That darkens now your life. You shall revive.

Alice. No, uncle, I am wrecked, and ruin stares
Me in the face. I am the shadow only
Of my former self.

West. All this will change.

You are exhausted ; tears stand in your eyes.
Stay in your room and think of me, my dear.
Remember that you are my all ; weep not.
Do as I tell you. Seek your strength in Heaven.

Alice. Yes, uncle, I'll retire : I feel so cold,
My heart is chilled, as if the arms of death
Had stretched themselves about me, and held fast.
O heart, O heart, why wilt thou break with grief ?
Be calm, be icy calm ! [Exit *Alice*.]

West. 'Tis done at last.
The farce is out, and I am glad indeed ;

But never have I had a harder task.
It is a risky game, but I'll succeed.
So forward, then, retreat is now cut off.
Thus far my part has been well played, 'tis true,
But I can't rest, there is yet much to do
Till all is gained, till Alice is my wife.
'Twas hard, I must confess, to watch the blow.
I had no other means to gain my end.
I'll win her heart, and not alone her hand.

[*Exit West.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I. *A Public Hall.*

George. Friends, fellow-workmen: we are here
to-night

To organize and to devise a plan
To better, if we can, our hapless state.
We all know West, we all know what he is:
He'd let us starve and die without regret
So long as he might multiply his dollars.
Well we know that words are lost on him,
And we must urge by deeds what words can't do.
It is but justice, friends, for which we fight,
And but by lawful means we'll win our right—
A right that's born with every human soul,

A right eternal, that entitles us
At least to ample clothes and ample food.
We claim the right to work for decent pay.

Patrick. Claim everything, and then get all
you can.

Peter. Before we start, let us invoke God's aid.
He is almighty: may He guide us right.

Several workingmen. Yes, may God help us!
Ask His mighty aid

To stir West's soul, awake his sleeping con-
science.

Patrick. 'Faith, boys, look for nary soul in
West;

I guess his soul is in his money-bag.

Paul. A soul so heavy, with so great a weight,
Is never likely to fly up to heaven.

George. This is no time to jest: we have a
task.

We best attain our aim by well-planned strikes;
The risk is great, but nothing else can help.
If strike we do, let's strike his money-bag—
In other parts we cannot hurt our man.

Fred. To strike is well, but whereon shall we
live?

George. In times of peace we must prepare for
war,

And public sympathy will greatly aid.

Charles. Don't count on public sympathy, good friend;

'Tis well enough, but it will buy no bread.

What does West care for public sympathy,
The heart- and soul-devouring glutton ! He
Can let the public speak without restraint,
And laughs at us, scorns public sentiment.

George. Naught but united action makes us strong;

United, we can battle without help.

Enter several Workingmen *with Henry.*

Newcomers. We looked for Mr. Henry, brought him here,

To ask for his advice. We know his grit.

He'll tell us which is best—join with the Knights
Or bring our forces to the Labor Union.

Henry. I'm not in a mood to hear your talk—I am disgusted with your faction fights ; And what advice can you expect from one Whose misery is greater than your own ? Friends, let me go.

Workingmen. O, stay and give us help ! You always let us feel your sympathy.

Henry. Show me the way to help you in your plight.
Your fight is manful, it is for the right ;

But where's the prophet who will lead you on,
Who can unite conflicting elements
And warring factions in your open camp ?
O, were you not so easily misled
By heartless scoundrels taking your last cent,
To lead a life of luxury and shame—
The prostitutes of a most noble cause,
Who but tear down what better men have built,
Incite to violence and open crime,
Who speak of progress, but do all they can
To keep you where you are. They know too well
That poverty and patience are not twins,
Like poverty and crime. But who can wait
When actual want is staring in his face ?
Give me the man who is no demagogue,
The patriot, the true American,
Who will devote his whole life to your cause ;
The man firm in adversity and luck,
The iron-willed giant of intellect,
Who can unite the toilers of the land,
And down an arrogant Plutocracy ;
The man who's just to all, who serves the right
For all his fellow-men, not for one class—
Give me the man, and I will follow him,
Will greet him as the great and true Messiah.
Once I dreamt that I could be the man.
It should not be, it was not given me :

'Twas but a dream, and that is over now—
My course is run, my life is lived for naught.

Workingmen. Why can't you be the leader in
our fight?

Henry. It is too late, I fear, 'tis of no use :
Plutocracy will soon destroy itself.
The sturdy farmer and the artisan
Will rise in anger and will crush the Moloch.
Now's your time, your opportunity,
To help the mighty cause ; if it is lost,
A century might bring no other chance.
The money-power is like one solid rock :
Why can't you have a federation, men ?
Whate'er you do, unite, friends, if you can.
Decry all factions ; see but workingmen.

Workingmen. Hurrah for him ! for he is always
right.

Be this our battle-cry : Unite, unite !

[*Exit Henry.*]

Enter JACK.

Paul. See, there comes Jack. Great heavens !
see how he looks !
Jack, what's the news, my boy ? How is your
wife ?
I hope she's well.

Jack. O yes, she is quite well.

No hunger more, no cold : she's still and dead.
All this I owe to great, to generous West.
He has discharged me too—another blow.
Perhaps he saw that I am getting old.
And more than all, he gave me good advice :
He thought to end my worldly cares at once,
And set a good example to you, boys,
'Twould be advisable to hang myself.
No doubt he's right. Is he not always right ?

Workingmen. That is too much ! With all his
misery

To mock him heartlessly in dire distress !

Jack. Is it too much ? It really is too much.
It must be so, if even you protest—
You, who're contented with your paltry bread,
Who've lived in chains from early childhood's
days,

Who hardly feel the fetters if not want
Reminds you but too frequently of them.

And is it then too much ? Why is't too much ?
Have we a right to live ? No, he is right.
He knows too well the people whom he owns.
He knows they're slaves and have a slavish mind,
Are only good for meanest drudgery.
Of freedom they know but the name, and not
The meaning. Yes, he's quite right to down us.
How can a man respect his servile slaves ?

He gave me good advice : I'll hang myself ;
But I will tie the rope in such a way
That his neck will be caught in the same sling.

Paul. Remember, Jack, that you have children.

Jack. Yes.

We have a poorhouse, have we not ? and there
They're better off than they are now with me.
Poor people's children are but born, it seems,
To fill these prisons with a motley crowd.
But what is left to them ? Their sense of honor,
Once awake, is killed in earliest youth.
It is the wisdom of our governance
That rogues and criminals are cared for, and
That honest workingmen are left to starve !

Peter. We feel with you ; but this is not the
hour

To think of your revenge : leave that to God.
We all look up to Him. We suffer all.
Heaven is our last, sole hope when all hopes fail.
And in the end, what is all worldly wealth ?
'Tis naught, and can't redeem us. For our pain
God will reward us—He is merciful.

Jack. If there's a God, and He can see such
things,

Then show me but His love, show mercy now.
If He creates us but to let us feel
The deepest depth of human misery,

Destroys us then just like a wooden toy,
And if this earth is His great masterpiece,
I have enough of Heaven. Yes, I've enough.
My poor dead wife and all my children sad
Cry for revenge! In Heaven they found no
ear.

But let it be. At least they'll find it here.

Peter. You lose your reason, Jack: try to be
calm.

May God forgive you, you have greatly sinned.

Workingmen. But it is true, this is a wicked
world.

George. Ye fools, do not complain about this
world.

It is our will, our brutal ignorance,
That makes it what it is. We are to blame.
We made it bad; and we shall make it worse,
If we're arrayed here in continual strife
Against ourselves, wage war against our friends;
We'll make it worse, if, in our blind career,
Low, petty jealousies and selfishness
Prevent connected work, prevent success.
Our enemies form one united host,
And therein lies their crushing force and might.
If we will only follow where they lead,
We shall be stronger: we outnumber them,
And we shall be a power in our land.

Organization is the magic wand
That forms our strength, insures our victory.
No need of violence if we unite ;
Then right will be our only force and strength,
'Twill be respected if upheld by all.
If we are one, both heart and soul,
Stand firmly all for one and one for all,
Then, friends, and not before that joyous hour,
Will dawn the morning of a better day.
We may not see it, but our children will.
Let's stand together, let us organize.
It is a glorious goal we're fighting for,
And we can reach it if we only will.

Workingmen. Hurrah ! He's right. We'll
form a mighty league ;
And if West still will give no higher pay,
We'll cease to work, we'll strike, and we shall win.

Jack. Ye cowards ! Strike and starve—
That is your doom.
Delay till death shall strike ! Wait till to-
morrow—
Let me strike to-day.

[Exit Jack.]

Paul. Just let him go
Until his anger shall be cooled, poor Jaek.
He's raving now ; his reason will return,
And may his peace of mind be soon restored.
'Twould be sheer madness to now keep him here.

George. Then let's go home, and may God grant success,
And that He will. A cause as just as ours
Is always sure to win.

All. It ought to win,
And it shall win ! It cannot meet defeat.
And till the victory is won by right
Be this our battle-cry : Unite, unite !

[*Exeunt Workingmen.*]

SCENE II. *Room in Mrs. Field's House.*

Ida. What has resulted of your wooing siege ?

West. That I am disappointed, I confess.
But Rome was not erected in one day,
And I have patience : you will witness that.

Ida. I do know something of your qualities,
Of what you have and what now you have not.

West. Yes, yes, you know it, and I know it too :
I have much money, but I have not you.

Ida. And never will, thank God !

West. Then, hope, farewell !

Ida. But tell me what she said.

West. Not very much.
What said she ? Well, she called me uncle dear,
And she knows well that I am no such man.

Ida. And how did you begin ?

West. That's hard to say.

I babbled of the sympathy of souls,
Platonic love, and other nonsense too.
I almost fear she did not understand.
I'm hardly just the man for making love.
And truly, twice I blushed; but if I'm home,
I'll learn my part with utmost diligence.
And you, my dear, might give me a slight hint
How best to win a woman's fickle heart.
I know that most are bought by boundless wealth,
But you and Alice are another kind.
In you I found my first and great rebuff.
But haply you are two exceptions, not
The rule.

Ida. If this be true, the moral is,
You'd better cease your wooing, leave us here
To love and hate as we see fit to do.

West. O, you do that without my leave, my
dear;
I merely try to lead you on to one
Who most deserves undying—

Ida. Love or hate?

West. Is that so difficult to say, my friend?
With equal reasons both for love and hate,
There is a doubt—'tis for love's benefit.
Therefore I say, one who deserves your love.

Ida. You say so, but I don't. Enough of that.
Now tell me, did you mention Henry's name?

West. Not onee, my dear. I hardly thought of him,

Or, rather, kept in mind your gentle threat
To tell our Aliee some unpleasant tales.
But what of him? He is not in the raee,
His claim for happiness exists no more.

Ida. In faith, I do not know why it should not.

I think his guilt is pardonable sin,
Not great enough to saerifiee him for.
It was a moment's madness, not so bad
As it might seem if seen with jealous eyes.

West. O, I believe it was not bad for you.
You take it eolly, are not hurt at all:
"There is no harm in it, O no, O no!
A niee young man, he takes us to his heart,
And kisses us; pray, tell me, where's the harm?
It was not right—he had another girl.
But then that is no fault—it was not wrong—
O, not at all; you know, in righteous love
We close our eyes to such a little joke,
And keep quite still; a kiss will never kill;
And then, we cannot help if we're so niee,
If this entieed him to embræe us; why,
The world is not in danger for that mueh.
'Tis nothing bad—in fact, it was mere fun."
But if the sinner were an older man,

One lean and lank, without attractions, then,
"The gray old sinner has no sense of shame.
The ugly monster, the enfeebled fright,
To kiss a decent woman ! 'Tis a crime !
Fie, shame ! No pardon ! He must pay for it !
To so insult us—us, whose innocence
Cries for revenge ! O, what a shock it is !"

Ida. Your mad insinuations cannot hurt ;
I am above your vile vituperation.
Noble is that youth, though once misled.

West. Ah, yes, he's noble ; that will cover all,
And he can take such little liberties.
He is misled by his young, fiery heart,
And what of that ? If I should dare the same,
I'm sure you'd pitilessly scratch my face.

Ida. West, I believe you're right.

West. I know I am.
You didn't scratch him, did you ?

Ida. O, how I hate
Your oily insults !

West. Do not call them that
Because I often tell unwelcome truths.
I know the world has always much indulged
The sins of younger men, not those of old
And ugly ones. I don't dispute that right.
I know there is too great a difference
Between a kiss from me and one from him.

But there is still another side to view.
Your pardon, friend, cannot decide this case—
It has been given with too great a joy.
But what will Alice think, is now the point.
Will she be satisfied? She has been wronged,
Not you alone, dear friend.

Ida. I grant 'tis so.
If you had used some of your eloquence
For right as you have done till now for wrong,
You could have done much good on earth, dear
sir.

West. Is it a wrong for which I intercede?
True, I confess, your views are very strange.

Ida. Why, right or wrong, if Alice knew it all,
She'd grant forgiveness without much ado.

West. I do not doubt that she would pardon
him;

But then her peace of mind were lost and gone,
And could not be restored were she assured
Of his true, steady love.

Ida. I well know that.
This fact alone can prompt me not to tell
What Alice ought to know. I must keep silence.
Why do you torment me, West? Wherefore
Do you insist that I make known to her
The wrong done in a moment of wild passion,
When you know that it will break her heart?

West. Yes, that is trne—I did insist on that.
And if I did, a reason must have urged.
The reason is that it might help me win ;
But if you think 'twill do her real harm—
And that it will, I only see too well—
And if you think it should not be divulged,
Then it shall stay our secret : that is all.
It eosts me much to do this, you must know,
But I'll forget, and even will forgive.
It is for Alice's sake and yours, my dear,
Not in the least for him.

Ida. That's a surprise :
I hardly could expeet as much as that.
You make me think you're going to reform.

West. Do I, then, need reform ? I go to
church—
It is my only recreation now ;
I'm member of a fashionable flock,
Where all are sheep with heavy golden fleece,
And where we're fleeced by fashion's strict de-
mands.

Ida. Is God to blame for them ? Believe in
Him ;
And, if you can, think of a future life.

West. I've thought of it, and pleasant was the
thought
As far as heaven is talked of ; but in hell

I couldn't believe. If God is merciful,
He fathers not monstrosities of pain
Which but the meanest cruelty can paint.

Ida. You make religion suit convenience, sir,
And fear has taught you this philosophy.

West. If there can't be belief without a hell,
I can believe in naught; and verily
I do believe in naught. Why should I fear
Things which I do not see and cannot grasp?

Ida. So you believe in naught, you say, and
yet

God, heaven, and hell are always on your lips.

West. 'Tis true, and they're sufficient for the
crowd.

If men ask for a gift or benefit,
They are referred to heaven. They threaten me,
I show them hell: it helps me wonderfully,
For these men are only held in check
By hope of a reward or fear of pain.
Their piety is but mere selfishness—
They're hirelings of a phantom, nothing else.
Now, friend, tell me the truth: does not this fear
In somewhat influence your actions too?

Ida. Yes, West, it does. I will not lie, it does.
I am a sinner, yet my faith is strong.
'Tis true that virtue has its own reward,
That we should do the good for love of it,

Not for our selfish motives and desires ;
But merely doing right can never give
What we call happiness. It is not all.
It must be all to those who lack belief,
And even then their life is but a blank—
Without strong faith it cannot have an aim.
They must be satisfied to live like beasts ;
Their pleasures even give them little joy,
And soon they feel the more the want of hope.
We cannot find true happiness in life.
You don't believe in God and future bliss :
Now tell me, West, what would you call your life
If your career on earth should now be closed ?
Would you be satisfied with life or not ?

West. Don't speak of that. In faith, you've
got me there.

I surely should describe it as a fraud
If I were now to die. With all my work,
I have not yet attained what I desire.
And not one hour in my eventful life
Has been a happy one. No, now to die,
So near my aim, so near my happiness—
No, now to die would make my life a blank ;
And if there is no hell to punish me,
This thought is worse than all the hells can be.

Ida. It only shows the truth of what I said—
Shows that you lack and need that solace true

Which but religion gives. If strong in faith,
We're every moment ready to leave earth.

West. Yes, you are happy fools ! I'm not like
you.

Ida. You can be if you will.

West. I'll try to-morrow.

Ida. No, to-day is the accepted time :
Who knows what ill to-morrow's dawn may bring ?

West. And will you be my teacher, pretty
friend ?

Ida. If I can help you to a better life,
I'll do it with the utmost pleasure, West,
For well you know your life has needed change.

West. My heart's enlisted, take my hand ; be-
lieve,

I will reform, I will reform for you.

And now, farewell, my dearest, gentlest, best,
My only faithful friend. Farewell, farewell.
I must attend to weighty things at once.

[*Exit West.*

Ida. O God, can I believe my eyes and ears ?
Grant what he said is really meant by him,
For it would end our troubles and our grief.
God, Thou didst wouders, and dost wonders still,
And if Thou wilt, Thou canst reform him too.

[*Exit Ida.*

SCENE III. *Room in West's House.*

West. [To Servant] Call Mr. Henry. He's still
in the mill,
I see a light—he must be in his room.

[Exit Servant.

I must get rid of him, then I'll have rest,
Can calmly reap the fruit of my designs.
If they should meet once more my labor's lost,
My structure tumbles, and—

Enter HENRY.

O, there you are.
Young man, what have you done, what have you
done?
To so forget yourself! Fie, shame on you!
And yet with all my heart I can condole.
You called me names. What do I care for that?
I call no names, but I can pity you.

Henry. I do not ask your pity, sir: don't strut,
Take off the mask, don't be theatrical.
I know that you enjoy what I have done;
State what you want. Be brief, I pray, and plain.

West. If that is your desire, I will, young man.
I need not tell you of the deep distress
Of those two ladies whom you greatly wronged.
However, 'tis their wish through me to say

That your engagement must be broken off.
I only add a friend's advice to this :
Flee far away ; there's money here—take all—
Take all that you may need, but flee. Be
quick !

And seek elsewhere the bliss that here you've
lost.

Henry. Ah, yes ! I will depart from here—I
go.

But where I go there is no need of gold,
And when I go, I will go like a man ;
Not like a coward will I part from here,
Abandon those whom I betrayed and lost.

But a few days, and they'll be saved from care,
They will be rich, be rich in spite of you.

What they would not accept from me alive
They hardly will refuse when I am dead.

West. You can do as you please. You must
know best ;

Your rôle of savior is a childish rôle.
You'd better save yourself if still you can :
There is no cause as yet for seeking death.
I hope you do not meditate this step.

Think of a future life !

Henry. What is the use ?
O, had I but believed in God and heaven,
I'd be another man than I am now,

Had I but had the simple faith of good
And honest men, I could be happy yet.
In science and in study is no rest.
When others slept, I've tortured my poor brain,
Have tried so hard to fathom all—and failed :
The more I thought the more confused I grew,
And found myself more wretched than before.

West. You, too, you are an unbeliever, man ;
You truly do surprise me, 'tis so strange !

Henry. I've always tried to lead an upright
life,

Have helped my brethren all with open hand,
Was kind to all, yet happy I was not.
I kept alone, denied myself the things
Which so delight the thoughtless of to-day,
And yet I envied them their thoughtlessness.
There was a missing something in my life,
But what it was I never could define.

In love I hoped to find the long-sought gift—
One moment has destroyed the sweet illusion.

How I came to leave my faithful girl
I hardly can explain. Life is a riddle.
Ida's beauty and her fearless mind,
And with it all a woman's weakness ; then
Her fearful struggles with her passionate heart,
Her true, strong love—again her fiery hate—
In fine, all these contrasting charms combined

Had proved to me a fascination strong.
I yearned to help her, and forgot myself,
And ere I thought I fell—fell fathom deep.

West. Enough of that. What will you do? I ask.

The sooner it is done, the better done.
It saves both sides a vast amount of pain.

Henry. As long as they are saved, care not for me.

What shall I do? I have no chosen road,
I do not care if it but leads to death.
Now I see clearly. Life is naught. Moreover,
Death is naught, and naught to naught is naught.
Then let me sink into the merciful
And vast abyss of nothingness—to end
The pain and anguish of a tortured mind.

West. Sink, by all means, storm-tossed and
fevered youth!

You are quite right, life is a wretched farce,
And I cannot advise against your wish.
Indeed, I fain would follow you.

Henry. O, do!

'Twould be the best deed that you ever did.

West. It takes a little courage, but it gives
Eternal rest, and what more can we ask?
A quick resolve, with one quick stroke in time,
Gives us perpetual peace. Whate'er you do,

Be quick about it. 'Tis a friend's advice,
And is the essence of philosophy.

Henry. Though 'tis a fiend's advice, I take it
yet.

West. Then fare thee well, and good success
to thee. [Exit *Henry.*]

The way is cleared, the last obstruction stormed,
And o'er another victim goes my path.

But what of that? He was not for this world,
This grand, good fool, with his soft baby-heart,
Too loving and too good to meet success.

He'll make them rich, but it will be too late,
And in the end the harvest will be mine.

It takes a man like me, who knows no fear,
Asks naught from God, from destiny, or fate,
To come at last to the long-fought-for end.

What do I care for fate? I'm fate myself,
And have been fate to all the gaping fools
Who had the hardihood to give me fight;
They are mere puppets in my iron hands,
I lead them merrily to death or doom.

And yet—and yet—I am not gratified;
There is some truth in all that Ida said.
But what's the use? Shall I too be a fool?
No, no, I cannot live on hopes, my friend;
Let me go on through life in my old way,
And be ye fools as long as you may live.

To-morrow's sun shall see my victor's smile,
 And I'll retire now to a well-earned rest.
 I've bravely fought, and I have won the fight.
 Good-night, ye fools! Ye fools, I say, good-night!
 [Exit West.]

ACT V.

SCENE I. *Room in Mrs. Field's House.*

Alice. I am resigned, and I am happy now.
 This dusky earth fades from my weary eyes,
 And heavenly calmness reigns supreme in me.
 What though that ealm is purchased with my life?
 What though it contemplates a broken heart?
 I'll fade from this into another life.
 And may that life be one sweet dream of rest.
 From that fair world beyond I shall look down,
 Protecting mother and my dearest friend.

Enter SERVANT.

Servant. There must be a big fire in town, Miss Field,
 We see the flames reflected in the clouds.

[Exit Servant.]

Enter IDA.

Ida. I hear West's house is blazing, child.

Alice. His house

In flames? Then I must go to Uncle West;
I can't leave him alone in his distress.

Ida. Dear child, stay here. I've sent a messenger.

Alice. I find no rest if I am not with him:
I am so frightened, and my heart declares
That something awful must have happened there.

Ida. Stay, child, be not so rash, stay here with
me;

West's not the man to ask a woman's help.

Alice. Yet he'll be glad to see me, will he not?
I'll stand by him as he has stood by me;
He is my friend, with him I stand or fall.
If he should die, then I will die with him.

Ida. My dearest child, I do not understand;
But don't be restive, I will go with you.
O Alice, tell me what has saddened you,
That all the smiles have faded from your face!

Alice. Though 'tis no time to smile, I can still
smile;
But, mother, let me go.

Ida. O, do not go.
How pale you are! What ails you, darling?
Speak!

Your smile is not my merry daughter's smile.
My poor, dear child, pray tell me why you're sad.

Alice. No, mother, no, I'm very happy now,

And soon I shall be happier still with Him,
My Maker, who will take me back again
From this life to a never-ending joy.

Pray send for Henry—I must see him yet
Before my earthly mission is fulfilled.

Before I go I'll seal the happiness
Of you and him, the most beloved of friends.

Ida. Ah, now I see. I understand you now.
My God, why did I once believe the wretch ?
But you're deceived, my child, you are deceived,
And all West told you has been worse than lies.
Henry forgot himself—'tis but too true—
Yet he has never ceased to love you, dear,
And here before my God I swear to you
I never loved him more than mothers love
The future husband of their dearest child.
O God, destroy the treacherous, fiendish wretch,
Who ruined me and now will ruin her !

[*Rings for Servant.*

Enter SERVANT.

Quick ! go and summon Mr. Henry here,
Tell him to come without the least delay.

Alice. Did I hear right ? Or am I in a
dream ?

O no, 'tis a mistake. Is West not good ?
Has he not been to me a faithful friend ?

Ida. He is the devil in a human shape.
My life he made a long, unceasing pain ;
Your father, I believe, was killed by him,
And now he wants to rob me yet of yon.
My curse on him, the wrecker of my life !

Alice. What did I hear ? Dear mother, pray
be calm.

He a deceiver ? Then he is a fiend !
Men cannot play such wretched, risky part.

Ida. I did not wish to ever tell you this ;
I strove to carry my deep grief alone,
Thus to preserve your heart's sweet innocence.
Again my sacrifice has been in vain !

Enter HENRY.

Henry. Can you still pardon me for what I've
done ?

Ida. I must refer you to my daughter, sir ;
My pardon will be easily obtained.
You'll never know the jewel you possessed.
If I should tell you what she's done for you,
Then you might see the depth of woman's love,
Might see how small you are compared with them,
Ye men with little love and godlike pride !
She had resigned to see her lover's bliss,
Were her own heart to break in the attempt.

Henry. I know I am not worthy of her love,

Though I do love her more than e'er before.
Could I describe the agony profound
That scorched my brain in these few dreary hours,
You would dismiss me with one word of hope,
And bring my torment to a sudden close.
One ray of light I've found in my dark course :
I've saved you from the clutches of that fiend.
My new invention will free you from care,
And you are rich. Am I forgiven ? Speak !
Then I will go—go, never to return.

Alice. But if I want to keep you, Henry dear ?

Henry. Ah, Alice, do not play with me like this.
Our iron age produces no such souls.
Your Christian faith dethroned the Grecian god ;
For one mistake men are now doomed to hell !

Alice. I'm but a simple and a foolish girl ;
You give me pain, you make me sad, 'tis true,
Yet is there need to tell you how I love ?
Yes, love you more than all words can express.
Between us naught is changed ; we're as before.
But make your peace with Heaven, pray to our
God,

And He will hear you in His boundless grace.

Henry. But, Alice dear, you can forget, still
love ?

I see there is a God ; I have been blind.
The god dwells in your heart—his name is Love.

We all must worship at his altar, or
We reap but pain, but misery and woe.
Such souls as yours, my child, no mortal's are.
'Tis love that keeps this shaky world intact,
Without it we are naught but mortal clay.

Enter WORKINGMEN and SERVANTS.

Paul. Is Mr. Henry here?

Henry. Yes, here I am.

What is it, Paul? What do you want, my friends?

Paul. We've come to tell you, sir, that West
is dead.

Henry, Ida, Alice. West dead? Impossible!

Paul. Yes, West is dead.

He's dead, and though a heartless, wicked man,
It was indeed an awful end for him.

Ida. How did it happen, tell me, my good
man!

Paul. We were awakened by the cry of fire;
And rising, soon our sleepy eyes beheld
A sea of flame reflected in the clouds.
We hurried to the scene of the big blaze.
It was West's house—fast burning to the ground.
The servants all were saved, but West was not;
And soon we saw him at a window high.
His life depended on a lucky leap;
He knew it too, we saw it in his face.

He wore his usual calm. No cry or moan,
No prayer or curse, escaped him: Hard as flint,
He measured still the distance to the earth,
When something happened which I'll ne'er forget.
The women screamed, "The devil! See him
there!"

The hardest men were chilled, chilled to the bones,
When a dark figure, blackened by the smoke,
Approached West from behind, and then tried
hard

To drag his victim with him to the fire.
It was a fearful battle fought up there,
And still grim Fate decreed that West should
win;

And calm and cool he hurled Jack to his grave.
Again he tried to make that fearful leap;
He still looked down on us with stern disdain,
His scornful smile seemed still to say, "Be-
ware!"

You shan't forget, and you'll repent this hour."
When with an awful crash the walls came down,
And both are buried in that tomb of fire.
May God be merciful and save their souls!

Enter LAWYER, who speaks to Ida.

Henry. Then he is dead, this all-defying man,
Who tauntingly has challenged his dire fate.

He has deserved it, but I pity him;
His awful end pays for his sins and debts.

Ida. The judgment falls. Our God is stern
and just.

Long He has waited, but the man was hard,
His cup was full, was floating to the brim.
I told him so, he only laughed at me,
And unprepared he's gone to meet his doom.
But all his sins to me, Lord, wipe them out,
They are forgiven. Let us all forgive,
And may he find forgiveness with Thee too.

[*To Workingmen*] And now a word to you, my
honest friends :

I must believe that I'm your mistress now.
This gentleman, who has been West's attorney,
Says that West has willed his all to me.
It is a solemn trust that I accept,
And with God's help I will now try my best
To heal the many wounds which West has torn.
Not for myself I take his riches, friends ;
From now each is my child, your mother I,
And all will be devoted to your good.
God grant me all the strength to do my work,
With my new son's and with my daughter's aid.

Henry. Yes, mounts of gold and seas of blood
freed black ;
Good-will alone can make the white slaves free.

Workingmen. Long live our mistress and the happy pair!

For freedom's cause begins a glorious fight;
Out ring our battle-cry: Unite, unite!

[*Curtain falls.*

THE END.

